

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is a statement regarding an accident.

SHRI RAM NAIK : it is a courtesy that if an item is not included in the List of Business, information regarding such an item is passed on to hon. Members and it is also displayed on the CCTV so that hon. Members who are in the Central Hall or in the Library can come and listen to the statement presented by the Minister. This simple courtesy should be extended to this House. Whenever a statement is to be presented, prior information should be given.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Speaker has already permitted him. In future, this will be done.

SHRI RAM NAIK : I have nothing to say. But, ultimately, courtesy demands that intimation is to be given to hon. Members.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This will be done in future.

15.06 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Re : Accident in Substantial Expansion Project of Madras Fertilizers Ltd. on 8.8.1997

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICAL AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. I rise to make a *suo motu* statement regarding the accident in MFL's substantial expansion project on 8.8.1997.

An unfortunate accident occurred in the night of 8.8.1997 during the final stage of commissioning of the Substantial Expansion and Modernisation Project of Madras Fertilizers Limited at Manali near Chennai. At 9.13 p.m., one of the manhole covers in the Secondary Reformer-RG Boiler section blew out with a loud report. The noise startled some contract workers who were engaged in insulation and other mechanical work. While rushing out in panic, 25 of the workers sustained various injuries. Two of the injured later succumbed to their injuries. The injured, who have been hospitalised, are expected to be discharged shortly.

Within two minutes of the accident, corrective action was taken by the Control Room for ensuring a safe shut down of the plant. The extent of damage is not expected to be serious. An exact assessment will, however, be possible only after two to three days, when the equipment has cooled down.

Dr. G.B. Purohit, Adviser, Department of Fertilizers was deputed on 9.8.1997 to make an on-the-spot assessment

and assist the project authorities in organising the resumption of the commissioning activities.

On 10.8.97, I myself proceeded to Chennai to see the victims of the accident and enquire after their welfare. Shri N.V.N. Somu, the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence, who is also the Member of Parliament of the area, Shri Sundaram, State Minister of Tamil Nadu Government and Shri Anil Kumar, Secretary (Fertilizers) also accompanied me. An ex-gratia assistance of Rs.1 lakh each to the families of the deceased has been announced. Ex-gratia assistance of Rs. 10,000 each is being given to 16 workers, who have suffered grievous injuries and Rs. 5,000 each to seven workers, who have sustained minor injuries.

I also visited the plant to confer with the management of MFL and review the progress of the efforts being undertaken by the project authorities for regaining the momentum of the execution of the project. It is expected that the commissioning activities will soon be resumed.

The management of MFL has constituted an enquiry committee to ascertain the cause of the accident and fix the responsibility for the failure of the equipment. An external expert has been included in the Committee, which is expected to submit its findings within a fortnight.

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, two accidents took place in a single day. You are narrating the accident of 8th this month. The second accident took place between Hawra-Tikiya-para railway stations of South Eastern railways.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : From where the issue of railway station has cropped up here ?

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : It is alright that no one has been killed in this accident. It was a local train. Local train. . . (Interruptions).

AN HON. MEMBER : This is not a statement pertaining to the railway accident. This is related with other department, not the Railways.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : I know that it is related to other department. The hon. Minister of Railways has issued a statement today morning. Is it not the duty of the hon. Minister of Railways to issue suo-motto statement on the rail accident, as was issued by the hon. Minister. One Minister is issuing the statement and the other Minister has not issued any statement. Not even a single day passes without any accident. . . (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now the discussion is going on railways only.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : This is a third accident in two days in this week only. It was also the duty of the Railway Minister to issue a suo-motto statement, as was issued by the hon. Minister.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR (Begusarai) : The Minister has made announcement regarding the compensation but he has said nothing as to whether the family member of the deceased would get employment or not.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It's alright. You have said what all you have to say.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Please provide employment to one member of the family of each deceased person alongwith compensation. This is a general rule and concept which exists in the industries.

SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI (Amreli) : What he is saying is right. The Minister should give some assurance in this regard.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It's alright. you too have had your say.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Minister will reply to it.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please listen to the hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, they are contract workers. So, the contractor will take care of the legal aspects.

15.11 hrs.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (RAILWAYS)-CONTD.

[Translation]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VARMA (Jalaun) : Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I sincerely thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on supplementary demands for grants of Rail Budget though, there is a railway line in Bundel Khand region but it is in a very pathetic condition. It takes around seven, eight hours to cover a total distance of 200 kms. from Kanpur to Jhansi. The passengers have to face a lot of inconvenience and moreover they have to

spent a lot of time due to the single line existing between Kanpur to Jhansi, which connects Jhansi with Mumbai, Delhi and other places. Therefore, I had put forth a demand before the hon. Minister to undertake doubling of this line. But the hon. Minister didn't pay any attention towards this demand. Alongwith doubling of railway line, I had demanded for undertaking electrification. If it was not possible then you could have fulfilled the demand of doubling of railway line. If undertaking doubling of 200 kms. railway line was not possible, atleast work could have been started by approving doubling of atleast 50 or 100 kms. line on this track. Then, Perhaps, the people of my region and I, as well would have appreciated you for this endeavour of yours.

15.12 hrs.

[SHRI CHITTA BASU in the Chair]

There is not a single direct train, out of the Delhi bound trains that originate in Kanpur, Urai, and Jhansi. The people of my region, who travel in these trains have to complete this journey in parts in different trains. The passengers first come to Jansi. They wait there for hours together and then they board a train for Delhi. I had requested the hon. Minister to extend the Chhapra train from Gwalior, Agra to Delhi so that the thousands of passengers of Urai region could reach Delhi directly. Earlier a shuttle was operating between Kaunch and Ait. It is operating now a days also. The officers has discontinued its service in the middle after showing losses. I had repeatedly demanded to extend the shuttle service upto Jhansi and to connect it from Kaunch to Urai so that the people of my region could travel upto Janshi. The concerned officers try to suspend the services of the shuttle by showing losses. This shuttle should be operated between Kaunch and Ait. Ait and Urai, Kaunch and Ait and between Ait and Jhansi, so as to continue its services for ever.

Hon. Minister, Sir, I would like to bring into your notice that the railway employees misbehave with the MPs and MLAs at Delhi Junction when the MPs lodge a complaint to this effect, the railway officers instead of taking any action just say that the allegations levelled are false and they don't even think it wise to take them into account what MPs and MLAs have to say. I would like to bring one more thing into the notice of the Hon. Minister that large scale irregularities are being committed in the recruitment of T.C., Station Master or other staff by the Railway Board. I have come to know that amount ranging from Rs. One lakh twenty thousand to Rs. One Lakh and fourty thousand is being collected as a bribe for providing a job/posting... (Interruptions). They are depriving the poor of their rights. ... (Interruptions).

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS